

Message Text

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44

ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5195
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
INFO USMISSION GENEVA

S E C R E T MOSCOW 0440

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, UR, XF
SUBJECT: SOVIET POSTURE ON ME

GENEVA FOR USDEL MEPC

REF: TEL AVIV 0120

1. REFTEL REQUESTED EMBASSY MOSCOW'S VIEW OF CURRENT SOVIET ME POSTURE, IN LIGHT APPARENT SHIFT IN ISRAELI PERCEPTIONS.
2. EBAN'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SOVIET POSTURE SEEMS CONSISTENT WITH GENERALLY POSITIVE LINE SOVIETS HAVE TAKEN ON GENEVA CONFERENCE. ACCUMULATED EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT SOVIETS HAVE MOVED AWAY FROM VIEW THAT HIGHLY UNSTABLE SITUATION GIVES THEM THE BEST MEANS OF EXERTING INFLUENCE IN ME. MOSCOW'S MORE FLEXIBLE TACTICAL APPROACH STEMS FROM THE IMPORTANCE SOVIETS PLACE ON DETENTE, THE DANGER OF CONFRONTATION IF PRESENT INSTABILITY CONTINUES, AND THEIR VIEW OF ME AS TESTING GROUND OF THEIR GREAT POWER STATURE.
3. AGREEMENT ON DISENGAGEMENT UNDER AUSPICES OF SOVIET-U.S. COSPONSORED GENEVA CONFERENCE WOULD THUS SERVE SOVIET INTERESTS BY DEFUSING EXPLOSIVE SITUATION AND ENHANCING SOVIET CREDENTIALS AS CO-EQUAL WITH U.S. IN ME AFFAIRS. WHETHER SOVIETS WILL SEE FURTHER PROGRESS AT GENEVA IN SAME LIGHT, HOWEVER, REMAINS TO BE SEEN. THEIR POSITIVE PUBLIC TREATMENT OF CONFERENCE AND
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THEIR INTIAL PLAYING DOWN OF SUCH POTENTIALLY DISRUPTIVE ISSUES AS PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION IS A POSITIVE SIGN. IF CONFERENCE MOVES FROM DISENGAGEMENT TO THORNIER ISSUES, HOWEVER, SOVIETS MAY BE FACED WITH TRICKIER QUESTIONS AFFECTING THEIR INTERESTS.

4. GROMYKO'S INDICATION THAT SOVIETS WOULD BE PREPARED TO REESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL IF "IMPORTANT PROGRESS" TAKESPLACE AT PEACE CONFERENCE ALSO APPEARS CONSISTENT WITH DEVELOPING SOVIET ME POSTURE AND UNDERSTANDABLE IN REACTION TO U.S. SUCCESS IN DEALING WITH BOTH SIDES. SOVIETS MAY NOT BE ABLE TO TAKE THIS STEP ON BASIS OF DISENGAGEMENT ALONE, HOWEVER. THEY HAVE STRONGLY AND PUBLICLY SUPPORTED LINE THAT DISENGAGEMENT MUST NOT FREEZE ME SITUATION AND MUST LEAD TO MOVEMENT ON GENERAL SETTLEMENT. THEY HAVE ALSO HEAVILY SUPPORTED MOVEMENT TO ISOLATE ISRAEL DIPLOMATICALLY. TO REVERSE THIS POLICY WITHOUT MAJOR PROGRESS AT GENEVA WOULD SEEM UNLIKELY UNLESS THE ARABS THEMSELVES SAW MERIT IN SOVIETS DOING SO. FINALLY, WHILE SOVIETS ARE ALERT FOR OPPORTUNITIES, WE DOUBT THAT THEY OVERESTIMATE THEIR POTENTIAL INFLUENCE IN ISRAEL IF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WERE ESTABLISHED.

5. WE ALSO INVITE ATTENTION TO MOSCOW'S 15345, WHICH ATTEMPTS TO DESCRIBE SOVIET ME POLICY IN CONTEXT OF BROADER SOVIET OBJECTIVES.DUBS

SECRET

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